

## Message Text

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44

ACTION SCI-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-09 ISO-00 NSF-01 AEC-05 AID-05 CEA-01

CIAE-00 CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-03 FEAE-00 FPC-01

H-01 INR-09 INT-01 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-07 OMB-01 PM-03

RSC-01 SAM-01 SP-02 SS-14 STR-01 TRSE-00 FRB-01 EPA-01

CEQ-01 COA-01 DRC-01 /078 W  
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P R 071606Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8807

INFO AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PLOS, TPHY, TGEN, NO, SW, NO

SUBJECT: U.S. OCEANOGRAPHIC VESSEL DRILLING REPORTED ON NORWEGIAN  
CONTINENTAL SHELF

REF: (A) STOCKHOLM 4468; (B) OSLO 1316; (C) OSLO 4418

1. NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT IS TILL TRYING TO SORT OUT FACTS  
OF DRILLING BY "GLOMAR CHALLENGER" IN VORINGPLATAAET. BASED  
ON DISCUSSIONS WITH DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR LEGAL AFFAIRS IN  
FOREIGN MINISTRY ELIASSEN THE FOLLOWING SEEMS TO HAVE OCCURRED.

2. U.S. SCIENTISTS CONCERNED WITH LEG 38 OF THE DEEP SEA  
DRILLING PROJECT IN CONSULTATION WITH NORWEGIAN SCIENTISTS  
AGREED THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO DRILL IN THE VORINGPLATAAET  
AS WELL AS NORTH OF NORWAY BETWEEN NORWAY AND BEAR ISLAND.  
(ELIASSEN BELIEVES THAT NORWEGIAN SCIENTISTS MAY HAVE SUGGESTED  
THESE SITES.)

3. A GROUP OF 5 OR 6 NORWEGIAN SCIENTISTS HEADED BY A PROFESSOR  
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HEJER, WHO IS THE DIRECTOR OF NORWAY'S GEOGRAPHIC

INSTITUTE, WROTE TO THE PETROLEUM DIRECTORATE ON THE STATIONERY OF THE POLAR INSTITUTE PROVIDING PLANS FOR DRILLING BY THE "GLOMAR CHALLENGER," ASKING FOR THE PETROLEUM DIRECTOR'S VIEWS ABOUT DRILLING IN THE VORINGPLATAAET AND BEAR ISLAND AREAS, AND SAYING THAT THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION WOULD NOT PROCEED WITH DRILLING IN THESE AREAS IF THE NORWEGIAN ATTITUDE WAS NEGATIVE. THE PETROLEUM DIRECTORATE IS THE TECHNICAL ARM OF THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY CONCERNED WITH OIL EXPLORATION. ON JULY 9, 1974 THE PETROLEUM DIRECTORATE WROTE BACK TO THE POLAR INSTITUTE WITH A COPY TO PROFESSOR HEJER INDICATING IT OPPOSED DRILLING AT BOTH THE VORINGPLATAAET AND BEAR ISLAND SITES, MAINLY BECAUSE OF THE RISK OF OIL LEAKS. PROFESSOR HEJER WAS ON HOLIDAY AND THE POLAR INSTITUTE ASSUMED THAT THE GEOGRAPHIC INSTITUTE, WHICH HAS THE MAJOR INTEREST, WOULD TAKE ACTION. HEJER DID NOT FORWARD THE LETTER TO THE AMERICAN AUTHORITIES, PRESUMABLY THE SCRIPPS INSTITUTE, UNTIL AUGUST 9, 1974. NO ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF THE LETTER FROM HEJER HAS BEEN RECEIVED FROM THE U.S.

4. THE EMBASSY WAS ONLY MADE AWARE OF THE "GLOMAR CHALLENGER'S" VOYAGE WHEN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S MINISTER-COUNSELOR FOR POLAR AFFAIRS BUCHER-JOHANNESSEN ASKED INFORMALLY AT A RECEPTION IN JULY WHAT HAD HAPPENED REGARDING THE BEAR ISLAND SITE. HE DID NOT MENTION THE VORINGPLATAAET SITE. IN A LETTER DATED AUGUST 2, 1974 RESPONDING TO AN EMBASSY INQUIRY, GANLEY OF SCI INDICATED THAT THE BEAR ISLAND HOLE WOULD BE DRILLED AUGUST 22-24 AND THE "PERMISSION IS NOT USUALLY SOUGHT FOR THE CRUISES OF THE "GLOMAR CHALLENGER" BECAUSE THE DRILLING IS NORMALLY DONE IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS--WELL BEYOND THE 12 MILE LIMIT." THIS INFORMATION WAS PASSED ON INFORMALLY TO BUCHER-JOHANNESSEN ON AUGUST 16 WITH COMMENT THAT THERE DID NOT APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN ANY OFFICIAL REQUEST FOR DRILLING PERMISSION OR OFFICIAL NORWEGIAN RESPONSE. NOTHING FURTHER WAS HEARD UNTIL INCIDENT REPORTED REFTEL.

5. NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT'S LEGAL POSITION ACCORDING TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ELIASSEN IS THAT PERMISSION SHOULD HAVE BEEN SOUGHT UNDER ARTICLE 5.8 OF THE 1958 CONTINENTAL SHELF CONVENTION AND THAT THE VORINGPLATAAET IS CLEARLY UNDER NORWEGIAN SOVEREIGNTY UNDER READILY EXPLOITABLE CRITERIA SINCE NODULES COULD BE MINED AT DEPTHS THERE. ELIASSEN ALSO POINTS OUT THAT AT LOS CONFERENCE IN CARACAS U.S. PROPOSALS ON SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH MADE IT CLEAR THAT COASTAL STATE PERMISSION WOULD BE REQUIRED FOR EXPERI-

MENTAL DRILLING.

NORWEGIAN PRESS REPORTS THAT NORINGPLATAAET DRILLING TOOK PLACE 200 KILOMETERS OFF NORWEGIAN COAST, THAT NORWEGIAN SCIENTIST ON BOARD "GLOMAR CHALLENGER" CLAIMS THAT EXPEDITION MEMBERS WERE UNAWARE OF NORWEGIAN OPPOSITION TO DRILLING AT VORINGPLATAAET. PRESS ALSO STATES THAT EXPEDITION LEADER MELVIN PETERSON WILL BE IN OSLO ON OCTOBER 10 AND QUOTES HIM AS SAYING THAT VORINGPLATAAET SITE IS 400 MILES FROM NORWEGIAN COAST AND THAT THE "GLOMAR CHALLENGER" DID NOT DRILL IN BEAR ISLAND AREA BECAUSE OF THE NORWEGIAN AUTHORITIES OPPOSITION TO DOING SO. PRESS PLAY HAS CREATED UNFORTUNATE IMPRESSION THAT U.S. ALONE IS RESPONSIBLE, THAT DRILLING WAS DONE DESPITE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION TO IT, AND TOOK PLACE ON NORWEGIAN SHELF. IMPRESSION IS LEFT THAT PURPOSE OF DRILLING WAS ECONOMIC AS MUCH AS SCIENTIFIC.

7. VORINGPLATAAET INCIDENT HIGHLIGHTS EXTREMES NORWEGIAN SENSITIVITY TO ACTIVITY IN THE NORWEGIAN AND BARENTS SEAS OFF NORWAY'S COAST. IT REINFORCES (A) EMBASSY'S REQUEST (SEE OSLO 1316) THAT IT BE KEPT AS FULLY INFORMED AS POSSIBLE OF AMERICAN SCIENTIFIC OR OTHER ACTIVITY BEING PLANNED OR UNDERTAKEN IN THE BARENTS, NORWEGIAN OR GREENLAND SEAS. IT ALSO UNDERSCORES THE POINT MADE IN OSLO 4418 THAT TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS CONTINUE'S TO OUTSTRIP POLITICAL DECISION IN NORWEGIAN AND BARENTS SEA AREAS, AND WE COULD BE WISE TO DETERMINE OUR POSITION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE ON VARIOUS MURKY QUESTIONS OF RIGHTS UNDER BOTH CONTINENTAL SHELF AGREEMENT AND SVALBARD TREATY.

8. ACTION REQUESTED: IN ADDITION TO INFORMAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TION REQUESTED IN STOCKHOLM 4468, EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE U.S. POSITION ON LEGALITY OF VORINGPLATAAET DRILLING, WHERE DRILLING ACTUALLY TOOK PLACE THERE, AND WHETHER DRILLING OFF BEAR ISLAND WAS ABANDONED AND, IF SO, WHY NOT IN VORINGPLATAAET. DEPARTMENT ALSO REQUESTED ENSURE THAT PETERSON COME TO EMBASSY TO DISCUSS MATTER BEFORE REPEAT BEFORE HE DISCUSSES IT WITH NORWEGIAN SCIENTISTS AND OFFICIALS. QUESTION HAS BEEN ASKED ON ISSUE IN PARLIAMENT AND EMBASSY NEEDS THIS INFORMATION URGENTLY TO SET RECORD STRAIGHT BEFORE QUESTIONS IS ANSWERED, PERHAPS ON OCTOBER 9.  
BYRNE

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**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
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**To:** STATE  
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